

He now gives a list of these additions, enumerating some 30 of the former and 7 of the latter.

135. *Wood on Hume's Bush-Quail.*

[Note on Hume's Bush-Quail (*Microperdix manipurensis*). By Captain H. S. Wood. J. A. S. B. lxxviii. pt. 2, p. 110.]

Capt. Wood states that Hume's Bush-Quail (*Microperdix manipurensis*) is by no means such a rare bird at Manipur as Mr. Hume supposed. During his seven years' residence there Capt. Wood shot more than 80 specimens. Details as to the nesting and habits of the species are given.

XLV.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed "to the Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

SIRS,—As I understand that some doubts are still expressed as to the truth of the extraordinary instinct attributed to the Honey-guide of attracting natives and travellers to bees'-nests (see above, p. 425), I beg leave to offer you the following account of my own experience in this matter:—

In October and November 1898, I was on a hunting-expedition in the province of Mozambique, in Portuguese East Africa. Starting from a station on the Beira Railway, I explored the country to the north of the Pungwee River for about sixty miles, accompanied by some twenty native carriers.

One day my boys brought me some honey to eat, and when I asked them how they had obtained it, they replied that the Honey-bird had guided them to the nest. Having heard the story of the Honey-guide before, I was much interested, and desired the boys, when they found the Honey-bird calling to them again, to be sure and let me know, as I wished to see the bird and its method of attracting attention. A few days later, on returning to camp, I found some of my boys absent, and was told that they were engaged in taking a bees'-nest. On proceeding to the spot,

which was not far distant, I found the boys engaged in chopping out a bee's-nest, to which they told me the Honey-bird had led them. I observed them leave a small portion of the comb on a branch near the nest, for the use, as they said, of the "Honey-bird," but I did not, on this occasion actually see the bird myself.

On another occasion, just after I had shot a hyæna and while we were engaged in skinning it, my boys told me they could hear the Honey-bird calling to them. I went with them into the bush, and saw a little brown bird flying from tree to tree, and heard it uttering a kind of twittering note. After following the bird a distance of some three or four hundred yards through the bush, my boys discovered the bees'-nest in the trunk of a tree, not far from the ground, and immediately proceeded to cut out the honey.

The belief in this curious instinct in the Honey-bird is so universally prevalent among the natives of Eastern Africa, and instances of success in obtaining honey in this way have been given by so many travellers, that I cannot believe there is room for any doubt on the subject. I may remind you that, among other well-known travellers, Mr. John G. Millais (see his 'Breath from the Veldt,' pp. 185-187) has recorded his personal experience of it, and has given a sketch of the bird guiding its human allies in search of honey.

Yours &c.,

W. T. BARNEBY.

July 24th, 1900.

SIRS,—It may, I think, interest the readers of 'The Ibis' to hear that, during our recent expedition to the Upper Nile, we had several opportunities of observing that remarkable bird, the Shoe-bill (*Baleniceps rex*). When in company with Major Peake, R.A., in the Egyptian gunboat 'Mettemeh,' in January of this year, I first saw specimens of this bird on the Bahr-Ghazal, near the mouth of the Bahr-Horur, in about lat. 9° N., where I shot one with a rifle. It was standing in a marsh alongside the river, some 20 yards from the bank. Later on in this year, about the end of April, I again observed the Shoe-bill on the Bahr-Jebel and Upper Nile, as far south as Bor.

On returning to the Bahr-Ghazal in June last, I shot another specimen of this bird near the mouth of the river. On this occasion there seemed to be large numbers of them about, and other specimens were obtained. The birds were generally seen standing on the banks, sometimes on dry land and sometimes in shallow pools or marshes. When disturbed their flight was slow and flapping.

Yours &c.,

WM. B. DRURY, Lieut. R.N.

Junior Naval and Military Club,
Aug. 4th, 1900.

SIRS,—Will you allow me to correct a remark made by Dr. Sharpe in his paper on the "Birds of the New Hebrides"? He states (*supra*, p. 348) that the majority of Layard's types are in the British Museum, whereas, with very few, if any, exceptions, these types are in the Liverpool Museum. Mr. Layard, after 1875, consigned all his collections to me, along with his MS. notes. He was in the habit of naming, but not always describing forms considered to be certainly new, while others were left to me to describe if I should think proper. The arrangement between us was that I should keep what specimens I wished, paying for them the same price as those obtained for specimens that were sold. After selecting my own series, I always made the first offer to the British Museum and the next to Mr. Seebohm, except in the case of Pigeons, of which Mr. Salvin had the second pick. Of course I reserved all the types for my own collection, and they are now all at Liverpool.

The specimens in the British Museum may claim in many cases to be "co-types," but not more. Of *Aplonis rufipennis*, only the type specimen ever came into my hands. Mr. Seebohm purchased, through me, the whole collection which Mr. Layard had reserved for himself. In this, if I remember rightly, were some of the first collection of 1875, which may probably have been types.

Yours &c.,

H. B. TRISTRAM.

Durham, 6th August, 1900.

SIRS,—I am indebted to Mr. James Gardner, the well-known taxidermist of 29 Oxford Street, London, for permission to describe an unrecorded egg of the Great Auk, which he has recently obtained.

This egg, which measures $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3''$, is marked with lines of pale grey, and at the larger end has several blotches, which, in consequence of having a thinner layer of shell over them, show greenish grey.

Unfortunately, some former owner of the egg has tried to clean it by scraping it with a knife, and has thus destroyed the surface of the egg, except where the blotches have escaped the cleaning process, and there the slight remains indicate that the texture was of a rough coarse grain.

The only history I have been able to obtain is, that for over 25 years the egg, packed in a box, had been hidden away in a book-case, and there is no information forthcoming as to when or where it was obtained by the person who placed it there.

Yours &c.,

EDWARD BIDWELL.

1 Trig Lane, E.C.,
August 23rd, 1900.

SIRS,—The last number of 'The Ibis' (*ante*, p. 570) contained an account, taken from the Abstracts of the Proceedings of the Geological Society for March 21st (Session 1899–1900, p. 77), of the discovery by Prof. H. G. Seeley of a bird's bone from the Stonesfield Slate. The bone was identified as the right humerus of a Carinate bird, and as resembling the corresponding bone in a Flamingo in size and in some structural characters. It was shown that the bone must have belonged to a bird that diverged in no way from modern types, and no indication was afforded of any affinity to *Archæopteryx*.

The specimen was found by Professor Seeley amongst a collection of Pterodactyl bones obtained by the late Earl of Enniskillen from Stonesfield; this collection is now in the British Museum.

At the Meeting of the Geological Society, Dr. C. W. Andrews, of the British Museum, pointed out the probability

of some mistake having occurred as to the beds from which the fossil was originally obtained, and suggested that the specimen, which much resembled the Stone-field fossils both in the appearance of the bone and in the matrix, might have been accidentally included with true Stonesfield remains under a common number in the British Museum. He also called attention to the fact that the occurrence of a bird allied to recent forms in Jurassic beds would involve a complete change in all the accepted ideas of evolution. Professor Seeley admitted that the matrix of the new fossil differed slightly from that of other Stonesfield specimens, but gave reasons for believing that all the specimens from the Earl of Enniskillen's collection had been obtained from Stonesfield.

The results of further enquiry into the matter have been communicated to me by Dr. Andrews, by whose permission I add the following extract from a letter of his:—

“Since the paper was read, I and several others have very carefully examined the specimen and the matrix, and I think it may be said to be absolutely certain that the bone is the humerus of a species of *Palælodus*. Probably it is *P. ambiguus*, an extremely common species, of which we possess several humeri identical in structure with Prof. Seeley's fossil. This species is described by Milne-Edwards in his ‘Oiseaux fossiles de la France,’ vol. ii. p. 60; it is a generalized Flamingo, exactly as Prof. Seeley has stated his fossil was. The matrix is the ordinary freshwater limestone of the Puy-de-Dôme, of Oligocene (Aquitanian) age. It has much superficial resemblance to some beds of the Stonesfield Slate. We have a number of undoubtedly Oligocene bones from Central France in a similar matrix; in fact we have a humerus of the same species in almost the same rock.”

I think this extract is sufficiently important to justify my calling the attention of ornithologists to it. It will be seen that as regards the affinities of the fossil, on which Professor Seeley's opinion has the weight of an authority, his views have been fully confirmed, but that he has been misled by the specimen having been, by some accident, associated with fossils from another locality. I should add that only a short

abstract of Professor Seeley's paper has appeared, and the paper itself will not be published in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society.

Yours, &c.,

W. T. BLANFORD.

September 3rd, 1900.

Progress of the National Collection of Birds.—From the Report on the British Museum for the year ending March 31st, 1900, which has been recently issued as a Parliamentary Paper, we extract the following passages relating specially to the Collection of Birds. Amongst the principal presents announced is a large collection of recent and fossil mammals, birds, and other objects from South America, and among these birds is an example of the White-throated Caracara (*Milvago albicularis*), which has not been met with since the days when Darwin discovered it in Patagonia. The operations of the year in the Bird Department are described as follows :—

“During the past year the registration and incorporation of the Salvin-Godman Collection and recent accessions have been completed. The preliminary re-arrangement of the exhibition series throughout the whole Gallery has been completed, and more than half the cases are now filled by new and beautifully mounted specimens. The old specimens, when of historic value, have been unmounted, and the remainder placed among the duplicates. The mounting of the new specimens has mainly been executed by Mr. Cullingford, of Durham.

“Three new groups of British birds, with their nests, have been added during the year, viz.: the Rock-Dove (*Columba livia*), presented by Capt. S. G. Reid, Mr. G. A. St. Quintin, and Mr. W. R. Ogilvie Grant; the Lesser-spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*), presented by Mr. A. M. Blake; and Leach's Fork-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*), presented by Col. Hugh G. Barclay.

“Rapid progress continues to be made with the re-arrangement of the collections of eggs and skeletons.

“Up to December 1899, 28,000 specimens of eggs had

been catalogued by Mr. Eugene Oates, and nearly the whole collection labelled and made available for reference, including the accessions received since the late Mr. Seebohm made the preliminary arrangement.

“The re-arrangement and determination of the collection of bird-skeletons continues to make satisfactory progress. Mr. W. P. Pycraft has carefully determined those of the Grebes, Divers, Struthious birds, and Tinamous, and a large number of specimens, both adults and embryos, have been added to the series.

“Much assistance in the latter work has been voluntarily given by Mr. Robert Reid.”

The additions to the Bird-Collection in 1899–1900 were 5626 in number, of which the following are specially mentioned in the Report:—174 birds from Nyasaland, including the type of a new Barbet (*Melanobucco macclounii*), and a new Shrike (*Malaconotus manningi*), presented by Lieut.-Col. Manning; 40 birds from Ascension Island and Diego Garcia, presented by Dr. F. Penrose; 114 birds, 6 nests, and 11 eggs from the Chilean Andes, presented by Mr. E. A. Fitzgerald; 242 birds from Argentina and Patagonia, presented by Dr. F. P. Moreno; 8 birds from British East Africa, presented by Mr. R. Crawshay; 30 birds from Muscat, presented by Surgeon Lieut.-Col. A. Jayakar; 9 birds, 29 eggs, and 76 nests from China, presented by Mr. J. D. La Touche; 9 birds from China, presented by Mr. F. W. Styan; 1192 birds from China, including examples of many rare species new to the collection, presented by Mr. C. B. Rickett; 111 specimens from Ecuador, purchased; 103 birds from Canada, received in exchange; 56 birds from South-east New Guinea, purchased; the type of a new species of Swallow (*Psalidoprogne percivali*) from British Central Africa, presented by Mr. A. Blayney Percival; 45 birds from Cape York, North Queensland, purchased; 21 birds from Basilan, Philippines, purchased; 12 birds from New Guinea, purchased; 16 birds from the Transvaal, presented by Mr. F. C. Selous; 18 birds from Tibet, presented by Capt. Deasy; 19 birds and 9 eggs from Nigeria, presented by Dr. Christy; 206 birds and 14

eggs from Sokotra and Abd-el-Kuri, including the types of 8 new species, collected by Mr. Ogilvie Grant and Dr. H. O. Forbes, presented by the Royal Society; the types of 8 new species of birds from Uganda, presented by Mr. F. J. Jackson, C.B.; 20 nests from Norway, presented by Mr. C. Horsbrugh; 664 birds and 53 eggs from the Galápagos Islands, collected by the Webster-Harris expedition, purchased; 18 birds from Galicia, Spain, presented by Dr. Victor Lopez Seoane; 54 birds from the Gold Coast, presented by the late Colonel H. P. Northcott; 23 birds from Bolivia, presented by Sir Martin Conway; 9 examples of the "Jer" Falcon from Greenland, purchased; 41 birds, including examples of 2 species new to the collection, from New Guinea, purchased; 4 birds from Roraima, British Guiana, including the type of a new Finch (*Zonotrichia macconnelli*), presented by Mr. F. V. McConnell; 18 birds from the island of Hainan, collected by the late Mr. John Whitehead, including the types of 5 new species, presented by Mr. J. T. Thomasson; 136 birds and 6 eggs from the island of Hainan, collected by the late Mr. John Whitehead, purchased; 190 birds from South China, including the types of 3 new species and an adult pair of the very rare Scaly Merganser (*Merganser squamatus*), presented by Capt. A. W. S. Wingate; and 416 birds from S. Abyssinia, including the types of 16 new species, and examples of 10 species not previously represented in the collection, presented by Mr. H. Weld-Blundell and Lord Lovat.

Birds figured in the Egyptian Tombs.—In acknowledgment (perhaps) of some slight assistance, Mr. F. Ll. Griffith has kindly sent to one of us two parts of the beautiful memoirs on the illustrations of the Egyptian Tombs published by the "Archæological Survey of Egypt," which have special reference to Birds. In the Fifth Memoir (Beni Hasan, pt. iii. 1896) plate ii. is entirely devoted to "Bird-Hieroglyphs," of which 15 are shown and explained in the accompanying text. The exact determination of the "conventionalized" figures is not easy, although in some cases

there is no room for doubt. The "Crested Ibis" (fig. 4 of plate ii.) is evidently *Comatibis comata*, or, as we must now learn to call it (see Ibis, 1898, p. 454), *C. eremita*, which may well have occurred in Egypt in former days. The figures of *Strix flammea* and *Neophron percnopterus* are also easily recognizable, though hardly accurate.

In the general series of hieroglyphs contained in the Sixth Memoir, a good many "conventionalized" figures of birds are again to be found, amongst which are recognizable representations of the Sacred Ibis (*Ibis æthiopica*), as well as of the Crested Ibis (*Comatibis comata sive eremita*).

A new work on the Birds of Egypt, which we may expect to be undertaken before long, should certainly not fail to contain references to all the species represented in the ancient monuments of all kinds.

The American Museum of Natural History.—The Report of this important institution for 1899 informs us that an exceedingly valuable collection of birds has been made for it in the U.S. of Colombia by the well-known collector Mr. Herbert H. Smith, and that he is continuing his researches for another year. In the department of Vertebrate Zoology 3139 birds have been received. Several new groups have been added to the Exhibition Series, and amongst them one of the Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus fuscus*), of which a photographic figure is given in the Report. The "Local Collection," which includes examples of all species found within 50 miles of New York city, "forms one of the most instructive features of Department."

Seebohm's Works on Siberia.—We read in the 'Athenæum' (July 14th, 1900, p. 61) that Mr. Seebohm's two volumes, 'Siberia in Europe' and 'Siberia in Asia,' have been out of print for several years. It was the author's intention to amalgamate the two, omitting the more ephemeral portions, and so forming one book, giving the result of his ornithological travels and researches in the north. He had made considerable progress with the work at the time of his death,

and it has now been completed by Dr. Guillemard, the author of the 'Cruise of the Marchesa,' &c., and will be issued by Mr. Murray under the title of 'The Birds of Siberia.'

Death of Captain Wellby.—With great regret we see recorded the death of Capt. M. S. Wellby, of the 18th Hussars, on Aug. 5th, from wounds received in the recent fight at Pardekop. Capt. Wellby was one of the most able and intrepid of modern British explorers, having traversed Asia from Leh to Peking, and Africa from Abyssinia by Lake Rudolph to the Nile. On returning to England some months ago from the latter arduous journey, he hurried off to join his regiment in South Africa, and met with his end as already mentioned. Capt. Wellby had a great love for natural history, although the opportunities afforded to him by his rapid style of travel did not give him much chance of collecting. During his stay at Abbis Abeba, however, on his last expedition, he managed to make a few skins of the following species, as kindly determined for us at the British Museum:—*Buteo augur*, *Turacus donaldsoni*, *Lamprocolius chalybeus*, *Heterorhynchus reichenowi*, *Dryoscopus ethiopicus*, and *Motacilla melanope*.

These skins we propose to deposit in the National Collection.—P. L. S.

Mr. Charles Hose's return to Borneo.—Mr. Charles Hose, DSc., F.Z.S., has just returned to his residency on the Baram River, Borneo, after a well-earned rest of a few months in this country, with every intention of resuming his well-known studies of the fauna of that district. Mr. Hose contemplates the publication of an illustrated volume on the Birds of British Borneo, for which, as is well known, he has been making preparations for many years. There is no one among living ornithologists better acquainted with the birds of Borneo or more competent to undertake such a work.